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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001997

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF FOR A/S KANSTEINER AND PDAS SNYDER; AF/S FOR
DELISI AND RAYNOR; AF/PDPA FOR RSMITH, DALTON, MITCHELL AND
SIMS
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [ZI](#) [KPOL](#)

SUBJECT: THE DAILY NEWS STRUGGLES TO RETURN TO THE STREETS
AS GOZ PRESSURE CONTINUES

REF: REF: HARARE 1943

Classified By: JPOLACHECK FOR REASONS 1.5 b/d

Tyranny Continues

1. (SBU) Since Sept 24 (reftel) the only independent daily newspaper in Zimbabwe, The Daily News (TDN), has not succeeded in getting an edition on the streets. TDN,s parent company, Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), was optimistic several times about returning to press only to see the government crack-down intensify. All the directors of ANZ residing in Zimbabwe have now been charged with felonies for running an illegal mass media operation under the Orwellian Access to Information and Privacy Protection Act (AIPPA) and now the GOZ is going after individual journalists for reporting without licenses. As of Sept 24, 16 of ANZ,s journalists have been charged, and the GOZ has expressed to ANZ that it intends to charge dozens more. Ironically, in December 2002, most if not all of these journalists did apply to the Media and Information Commission (MIC, a body appointed by and responsible to Minister of Information J. Moyo), the fees being paid by ANZ, and none of the applications were acted upon by the MIC. Several ANZ court challenges are underway, but, as is typical, now that the GOZ has the situation as they want it, the status quo is perpetuated by glacially slow courts. The police continue to hold on to ANZ,s property, and the judge hearing ANZ,s urgent application has twice reserved judgment. It is not clear that the charges filed against the individual journalists are anything more than a form of harassment and intimidation.

Survival of the Fittest

2. (C) ANZ is working hard to get some sort of counterweight to the daily propaganda of GOZ,s two daily newspapers. The front page of the Sept 26 the South African &Mail and Guardian8 (owned by ANZ,s parent company) featured TDN masthead and the headline &We publish the voices Mugabe silenced8. Inside were several articles by TDN editors. The edition sold out its Zimbabwean print run and an additional printing sold out on Sept 29. ANZ is in the process of putting together an external weekly edition of TDN as well as placing articles in the three independent weeklies that are still printing. Discussions with civil society groups are ongoing to use the internet as an alternative distribution channel, so that TDN would publish a daily print-ready internet edition and the hundreds of civil society groups would print several hundred copies on office printers for mass dispersion. ANZ is pursuing legal challenges on factual and constitutional grounds to the MIC, AIPPA and the police,s actions. ANZ CEO Sam Nkomo told the Ambassador on October 1 that ANZ owner Strive Misiywa intends to continue paying all ANZ salaries to prevent the GOZ from scattering the paper,s human resource base, especially important in light of a new private but pro-government paper starting up in December.

The Battle Lost, the War Begins?

3. (C) COMMENT TDN probably will not be back on the streets in the foreseeable future. The sentiment within ANZ and post,s contacts within the government-controlled press is that Min. Moyo has no intention of allowing TDN to resume publication. This heavy-handed disregard for the rule of law, targeted at one of the most popular institutions in Zimbabwe (independent estimates gave TDN 1 million readers daily), appears to have galvanized public attention. It is one factor taxing the patience of the ever-placid Zimbabweans though there are no immediate signs that mass protest is imminent. The GOZ appears to be playing a waiting

game in which they expect Zimbabweans and the international community to eventually accept this new status quo and forget there ever was an independent daily newspaper. It is important that this not occur, and that we maintain the focus on this outrage and the pressure on the GOZ.

SULLIVAN